

SUPERINTENDENT RECRUITMENT: A STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT OF PRINCIPAL ATTRACTION TO THE JOB

Introduction

One of the most important administrative challenges educational leaders—such as school board members and state department of education policymakers—face is the task of recruiting qualified personnel to fill superintendent vacancies in the nation's public school districts (Carter & Cunningham, 1997; Cooper, Fusarelli, & Carella, 2000; Glass, 1992, 2001a, 2001b; Glass & Björk, 2003; Kowalski, 1995, 1999, 2001; Tallerico, 2003). There is a substantial body of research focused on a wide array of issues relative to superintendents, including: superintendent career expectations (Cooper, Fusarelli, & Carella, 1999), superintendent job satisfaction (Fusarelli, Cooper, & Carella, 2003), state education leaders perceptions of the superintendency (Glass, 2001a), school board president assessments of applicant pools for superintendent vacancies (Glass, 2002), executive search consultant views of the supply and demand for superintendents (Glass, 2001b), superintendent turnover (Natkin, Cooper, Alborano, Padilla, & Ghosh, 2003), and gender and racial equity relative to superintendent hiring (Tallerico, 2000, 2003).

However, despite the considerable research attention paid to superintendents, there is one line of existing educational recruitment research that, as yet, has not been applied to superintendent vacancies. This line of inquiry, abundant relative to other educational personnel such as teachers (e.g., Winter, 1996; Winter & Melloy, 2005; Young, Place, Rinehart, Jury, & Baits, 1997; Young, Rinehart, & Heneman, 1993) and principals (e.g., Pounder & Merrill, 2001; Winter & Morgenthal, 2002; Winter, Rinehart, Keedy, & Björk, 2004), involves making empirical assessments of the job pursuit intentions of potential applicants for position vacancies. The typical methodology used in such investigations is to have qualified individuals, who are valid potential aspirants to the position under examination, rate their attraction to the job (Young et al., 1997; Young et al., 1993; Winter, Millay, Björk, & Keedy, 2005), with job rating serving as a focal criterion variable in subsequent analyses.

Consistent with the above line of inquiry, this study focused on the degree of attraction to the superintendency among a statewide cadre of experienced principals. Principals are an externally valid population to serve as participants in such research because they form an important component of the pipeline of potential future applicants for superintendent vacancies. In a national study about school board presidents, Glass (2002) found that “only fifty-two percent (52.6%) of newly hired superintendents possessed prior experience as a superintendent” (p. 7) and only about a third of new superintendents had prior experience as an assistant superintendent. By contrast, 97.9% of newly hired superintendents had prior experience as a principal at the high school (49.3%), middle school (24.3%), or elementary school (24.3%) level (Glass, 2002, p. 26).

Further, investigating the pipeline of potential applicants for superintendent vacancies is timely due to the massive retirements of school administrators beginning to occur among individuals who are members of the post-World War II “baby boom” generation (U.S. Department of Labor, 2000). Finally, despite the importance of assessing qualified applicants for superintendent vacancies, the education literature contains almost no empirical research about applicant attraction to the position among individuals, such as experienced principals, who comprise the supply of candidates qualified to fill position vacancies. In fact, there are so few administrator studies focused on applicant attraction to administrator vacancies that Pounder and Young (1996) issued a call for more empirical studies about factors that influence administrator recruitment:

Given the importance of recruitment, it is disappointing that few, if any, empirical studies exist which bear specifically on the attraction of individuals to public school administrator positions. In view of this void in the professional literature, investigators should pursue research in this area. (p. 288)

We sought to address the above gap in the educational administration literature by researching the superintendent job pursuit intentions of a statewide cadre of public school principals in Kentucky, a state undergoing systemic school reform for over a decade as a result of mandates specified in the 1990 Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA). The KERA reform program (Kentucky Education Reform Act, 1990) includes high-stakes student achievement tests (Kentucky Department of Education, 2001), with school principals and district superintendents being the most visible individuals held accountable for student performance (Petrosko, 2000).

The Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) formed a statewide K–12 leadership consortium that consisted of educational policymakers (e.g., members of state government, leaders of the Educational Professional Standards Board, executives from business and civic groups), district superintendents and school principals, and educational administration professors. The consortium, known as the State Action for Education Leadership Policy (SAELP) group, commissioned the researchers to conduct this study to develop reliable data to support planning and administrative decision-making related to administrator recruitment and development.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to assess a statewide cadre of public school principals in terms of their attraction to the job of district superintendent. Two assumptions underlying the investigation were that (a) participant self-reported capability to become a superintendent impacts participant attraction to the job, and (b) participant satisfaction with facets of their current jobs and their expected satisfaction with those same job facets in the job of superintendent give an indication of participant likelihood of pursuing the job of superintendent.

The study had four objectives: (a) develop a demographic profile of the participants, including self-reported capability to become a superintendent; (b) capture participant satisfaction ratings for 20 job facets common to both their current positions and the job of superintendent; (c) identify predictors of whether or not the participants had earned superintendent certification, as an indicant of participant future interest in pursuing a job as superintendent; and (d) assess potential predictors of participant attraction to the job of superintendent by having the participants react to a survey item capturing their likelihood of pursuing a position as superintendent.

The intended use of the study findings was to inform members of the SAELP leadership consortium with respect to the viability of principals as future applicants for superintendent vacancies. Knowledge about this issue was important for understanding whether or not the state was likely to have a sufficient supply of qualified school administrators to lead Kentucky public school districts in successfully reforming education within the context of the KERA school reform program.

Conceptual Framework

Although this investigation was exploratory in nature, we grounded our selection of independent and dependent variables, the study design, and the specified analytical techniques in existing human resources theory. The theoretical perspectives guiding this research were: (a) recruitment theory (Rynes, 1991; Rynes & Barber, 1990; Schwab, 1982; Schwab, Rynes, & Aldag, 1987); (b) job satisfaction theory (Cranny, Smith, & Stone, 1992; Hulin, Roznowski, & Hachiya, 1985; Locke, 1976); and (c) self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1986, 1993, 1995).

Existing recruitment theories cast the personal characteristics of potential job applicants and job facets related to the position vacancy as important predictors of applicant attraction to the job. Consistent with existing recruitment theories (e.g., Rynes, 1991; Rynes & Barber, 1990), we cast personal characteristics of the participant-principals and principal satisfaction with job facets as predictor variables of interest. We also had the participants rate their likelihood of pursuing the job of superintendent and cast this job rating as the dependent variable of interest. The operational definition of recruitment adopted for this investigation was the one developed by Rynes (1991): "Recruitment encompasses all organizational practices and decisions that affect either the number, or types, of individuals who are willing to apply for or accept a given vacancy" (p. 429).

With respect to job satisfaction theory, it is known that attraction to a job is related to perceived job satisfaction (Cranny et al., 1992; Hulin et al., 1985). We applied this proposition by asking the practicing principals to rate their satisfaction with 20 job facets in their current jobs and their expected satisfaction with those same 20 job facets in the job of superintendent. We derived the 20 job facets from previous job satisfaction studies involving instruments containing ratings for job facets that had a high degree of commonality across many job classifications (e.g., salary, sense of achievement,

job security) and had been assessed repeatedly for reliability and construct validity (Cranny et al., 1992). The rationale for comparing participant satisfaction with a given job facet (e.g., vacation time) in the participant's current job with participant expected satisfaction with that same job facet in the job of superintendent was the assumption that, if individuals were more satisfied with the facet in the current position than they expected to be satisfied with that same job facet in the job of superintendent, current satisfaction with the job facet might be a disincentive for participants to pursue the job of superintendent. If the opposite were to be the case (i.e., rating expected job satisfaction higher than rating of current job satisfaction), the assumption was that the job facet might be a positive incentive for participants to pursue a superintendent position. The operational definition of job satisfaction adopted for this study was the definition developed by Locke (1976): "Job satisfaction may be defined [...] as a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences" (p. 1300).

Relative to self-efficacy theory, we captured participant self-reported rating for capability to become a superintendent, which is a measure consistent with self-efficacy theory as defined operationally by Bandura (1995): "Perceived self-efficacy refers to beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations" (p. 2). In the recruitment context addressed by this research, potential job applicants initiate the course of action of pursuing the job vacancy. A job applicant's perceived self-efficacy can influence job pursuit behaviors because "efficacy beliefs influence how people feel, think, motivate themselves, and behave" (Bandura, 1993, p. 118). Bandura (1986) further asserted self-efficacy impacts "the career options that can be realistically considered" (p. 431). The career option we operationalized in this investigation was whether or not an experienced practicing principal would be likely to pursue the job of superintendent.

Research Questions

The research questions addressed by this research were as follows.

1. To what degree do principals indicate they either are more satisfied with 20 specified job facets in their current jobs, or expect to be more satisfied with those same 20 job facets in the job of superintendent?
2. Which personal characteristics or job-related factors impact whether or not principals earn superintendent certification?
3. Which personal characteristics or job-related factors predict principal likelihood of pursuing the job of superintendent?

Methods

This study was a field survey designed and implemented according to procedures established by Dillman (2000). The study was a combination of the quasi-experimental and correlation designs, as explicated by Campbell and Stanley (1963), and involved three analytical procedures:

paired-samples *t*-tests, two-group discriminant analysis, and hierarchical multiple regression analysis.

Participants and Sample

The study participants were practicing public school principals from Kentucky ($N = 587$) who responded to a statewide survey questionnaire (response rate = 58.8%). These individuals served as participants because of a statewide leadership consortium's desire to gauge interest among Kentucky school principals in pursuing a position as district superintendent.

Instrument

The survey had a demographic section that captured data about participant personal characteristics. This section of the survey also captured ratings for two key variables in the inferential statistical analysis: (a) a measure of a dependent variable in the analysis, "How likely are you to pursue a job as superintendent?" (1 = not at all likely, 5 = very likely) and (b) a measure of self-reported capability to become a superintendent, "At this point in your career, how capable do you feel you are to become a superintendent?" (1 = not at all capable, 5 = extremely capable).

A second section of the survey contained items measuring participant satisfaction with 20 job facets in their current jobs and their expected satisfaction with these same 20 job facets if they were to assume a superintendent position. The participants responded to the current and expected job satisfaction items using 5-point Likert-type scales (1 = not at all satisfied, 5 = extremely satisfied). The above scales derived from previous research that rendered reliable measures in similar studies (Aiken, 1996; Cranny et al., 1992; Gable & Wolf, 1993). The instrument used in this research is in the Appendix.

Independent Variables

The independent variables in the discriminant analysis and the multiple regression analysis were principal personal characteristics (e.g., age, gender, ethnicity, self-reported capability to become a superintendent) and additive composite scales for current and expected satisfaction with 20 job facets. The composite scales derived from components extracted via two principal components analyses of the 20 job facets, one analysis for current job satisfaction items and another analysis for expected job satisfaction items.

Dependent Variables

The dependent (i.e., grouping) variable for the discriminant analysis was participant status regarding having earned superintendent certification (1 = yes, 2 = no). The dependent variable for the multiple regression analysis was participant rating for likelihood of pursuing a job as superintendent, measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale (5 being most favorable). This measure of job attraction has a long history of use in the private-sec-

tor recruitment literature (Alderfer & McCord, 1970; Barber, 1998; Rynes, 1991) and in the educational recruitment literature (Young et al., 1997; Young et al., 1993).

Results

Analysis of the data proceeded in two steps: descriptive statistics and inferential analysis. The inferential analysis included: (a) paired-samples *t*-tests assessing group mean differences between participant current job satisfaction and expected job satisfaction in the job of superintendent; (b) principal components analysis of the 20 job satisfaction items for both current and expected satisfaction to establish construct validity and perform data reduction; (c) two-group discriminant analysis to assess predictors of whether or not participants earned superintendent certification; and (d) hierarchical multiple regression analysis to identify predictors of participant likelihood of pursuing the job of superintendent.

Descriptive Analysis

The descriptive data for the participants are in Table 1.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics (N = 587)

Variable	<i>n</i>	%	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Range
Age			46.9	7.5	29–68
Gender					
Female	281	47.9			
Male	306	52.1			
Ethnicity					
White	559	95.2			
African American	21	3.6			
Hispanic American	1	.2			
Asian American	2	.3			
Native American	3	.5			
Other	1	.2			
Marital status					
Married	499	85.0			
Single	88	15.0			
Dependent children			.9	1.1	0–6
Superintendent certified					
Yes	72	12.3			
No	515	87.7			

(continued)

Table 1 (*continued*)

Variable	<i>n</i>	%	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Range
If yes, when earned superintendent certificate					
≥ 5 years ago	47	65.3			
< 5 years ago	25	34.7			
If no, intend to earn superintendent certificate?					
Yes	108	21.0			
No	407	79.0			
Capability to become a superintendent			3.2	1.2	1–5
Likelihood of pursuing a job as superintendent			2.0	1.3	1–5
1 = Not at all likely	319	54.3			
2	81	13.8			
3 (see note below)	87	14.9			
4	50	8.5			
5 = Very likely	50	8.5			

Note. The variable likelihood of pursuing a job as superintendent had scale anchors only over the lowest and highest points on the scale. See the Appendix for how this item appeared on the survey instrument.

As can be seen from the data in Table 1, the participants averaged 46.9 years of age and were (a) evenly distributed by gender (52.1% = male), (b) predominantly White (95.2%), and (c) predominantly married (85.0%). The vast majority of the participants were not superintendent certified (87.7%), and most of those who were not certified did not intend to become certified (79.0%), suggesting relatively low interest in pursuing the job of superintendent. Most of the participants who were superintendent-certified had held their certification for five years or more (65.3%), suggesting a modest degree of intent to transition from the job of principal to the job of superintendent.

On a 5-point scale (5 being most favorable), the participants rated their capability to become a superintendent an average of 3.2, a modest degree of perceived self-efficacy relative to assuming the job of superintendent. And, finally, when asked to rate their likelihood of pursuing the job of superintendent on a 5-point scale (1 = not at all likely, 5 = very likely), a majority of the participants (68.1%) indicated they were either not at all likely or only somewhat likely to pursue the job (i.e., rating of either 1 or 2 on the 5-point scale).

*Paired-Samples *t*-Tests*

Because conducting multiple *t*-tests (e.g., 20 tests in this research) on the same data may inflate the probability of committing a Type I statis-

tical error (i.e., claiming significance when there is no significance), the researchers adjusted the alpha level to the more conservative level of .0025 using the Bonferroni adjustment (Keppel, 1991). The results of the paired-samples *t*-tests appear in Table 2.

Table 2

*Results of Paired-Samples *t*-Tests Comparing Current Job Satisfaction and Expected Job Satisfaction in the Job of Principal (N = 587)*

Rating item	<i>t</i> -value
Current satisfaction higher	
Opportunity to use my talents	5.7 *
The work climate	5.3 *
Sense of achievement I experience	3.9 *
Overall job security	20.1 *
Opportunity to advance my career	5.1 *
Opportunity to serve others	4.7 *
Expected satisfaction higher	
My salary	-16.3 *
Income from extra-service pay	-11.9 *
Income earned in the summer	-4.5 *
Hours worked per year	-4.2 *
Way district policies implemented	-11.6 *
Recognition received for doing a good job	-9.1 *

Note. Adoption of the Bonferroni correction resulted in an alpha level for the above *t*-tests of $\alpha = .0025$.

* $p \leq .0025$.

As can be seen from Table 2, the participants rated six job facets (e.g., work climate, overall job security) as being more satisfying in the current job, suggesting these work facets may operate as disincentives for principals to pursue the job of superintendent. In contrast to these findings, the participants rated six job facets (e.g., salary, way district policies are implemented) as expected to be more satisfying in the job of superintendent, suggesting these job facets may operate as positive incentives for principals to pursue the job of superintendent. There were no differences in group mean scores (current versus expected job satisfaction) relative to eight job facets: (a) freedom to make my own decisions, (b) opportunity to try my own way of doing things, (c) vacation time, (d) time with family, (e) hours worked per week, (f) effect of job on spouse, (g) opportunity to experience varied activities, and (h) opportunity to give direction to others. It would appear these eight job facets, when addressed in the context of job satisfaction, did not act as either an incentive or disincentive relative to principals pursuing a job as superintendent.

Principal Components Analysis

Principal components analysis served to construct-validate the 20 rating items for both ratings of current job satisfaction and rating of expected job satisfaction. This procedure also served to reduce the 40 ratings to a more manageable number of predictor variables for the subsequent procedures of discriminant analysis and multiple regression analysis. The results of the principal components analyses appear in Tables 3 and 4. The specifications for the analyses are in notes at the bottom of each table. Also indicated in the notes are the KMO and Bartlett's test statistics, which both show that the correlation matrices were adequate for performing principal components analysis; that is, there was sufficient correlation among the items being analyzed and the correlation matrix was not an identity matrix.

Table 3

Rotated Principal Components Matrix for Current Job Satisfaction Items (N = 587)

Current job satisfaction item	Comp. 1	Comp. 2	Comp. 3
Use talents	.77		
Salary			.65
Work climate	.64		
Freedom to make decisions	.70		
Sense of achievement	.80		
Try own way of doing things	.76		
Vacation		.61	
Extra-service pay			.67
Time with family		.85	
Extra income/summer			.54
Hours per week		.81	
Advance in career			.53
Hours per year		.84	
Effect on spouse career		.65	
Varied activities	.63		
Serve others	.67		
Give direction to others	.76		
Eigenvalue	5.1	3.7	2.5
Variance explained (%)	25.3	18.6	12.6
Number of items	8	5	4
Coefficient alpha	.89	.86	.88

Note. Principal components specifications: (a) varimax rotation, (b) component extraction criterion = eigenvalue ≥ 1 , (c) component loading criterion $\geq .40$, (d) KMO = .92, and (d) Bartlett's Test: $\chi^2 = 5,799.9$ [$df = 190, p \leq .0001$]. Cumulative variance explained = 56.5%.

Table 4

Rotated Principal Components Matrix for Expected Job Satisfaction Items (N = 587)

Expected job satisfaction item	Comp. 1	Comp. 2	Comp. 3	Comp. 4
Use talents	.70			
Work climate	.76			
Freedom to make decisions	.81			
Sense of achievement	.77			
Try own way of doing things	.75			
Vacation			.53	
Extra-service pay				.78
Time with family			.74	
Extra income/summer				.78
Hours per week			.77	
Hours per year			.77	
Effect on spouse career			.67	
Serve others		.76		
District policies		.65		
Give direction to others		.81		
Recognition for doing good job		.65		
Eigenvalue	4.1	3.4	3.3	2.1
Variance explained (%)	20.6	16.9	16.5	10.5
Number of items	5	4	5	2
Coefficient alpha	.90	.84	.85	.74

Note. Principal components specifications: (a) varimax rotation, (b) component extraction criterion = eigenvalue ≥ 1 , (c) component loading criterion $\geq .40$, (d) KMO = .91, and (d) Bartlett's Test: $\chi^2 = 6,302.8$ [$df = 190$, $p \leq .0001$]. Cumulative variance explained = 64.5%.

The analysis for the current job satisfaction items rendered three components that explained 56.5% of the common variance (see Table 3). Eight items loaded significantly on Component 1 and coefficient alpha for the resulting additive composite scale was .89. The items that loaded on Component 1 were internally mediated job facets (e.g., opportunity to use one's talents, sense of achievement) and resulted in naming this component Current Intrinsic Job Facets. Five items loaded on Component 2 ($\alpha = .86$). The content of these items (e.g., time with family, hours worked per week) resulted in naming this component Current Time/Family. Four items loaded on Component 3 ($\alpha = .88$), and the content of these items (e.g., extra-service pay, opportunity to advance in one's career) rendered the name Pay/Advancement for this component.

The analysis for the expected job satisfaction items yielded four components that explained 64.5% of the common variance (see Table 4).

Five items loaded on Component 1 ($\alpha = .90$). The content of these items (e.g., work climate, opportunity to try one's own way of doing things) resulted in naming the component Expected Intrinsic Job Facets. Four items loaded on Component 2 ($\alpha = .84$), and the item content (e.g., opportunity to experience varied activities, way district policies are implemented) rendered the component name Variety/Influence. Five items loaded on Component 3 ($\alpha = .85$). The content of the items (e.g., vacation, hours per year) resulted in naming the component Expected Time/Family. And, finally, two items loaded on Component 4 ($\alpha = .74$) with the items' content (e.g., extra-service pay, extra summer income) rendering the component name Extra Income. The coefficient alphas reported above far exceeded the minimum ($\alpha = .60$) recommended for use of composite scales in statistical analysis (Nunnally, 1967).

Discriminant Analysis

The discriminant analysis performed for this study was a two-group stepwise discriminant analysis, with having earned superintendent certification (1 = yes, 2 = no) serving as the criterion variable. The intent of this analysis was to identify the most powerful predictors of whether or not the participants earned superintendent certification, a behavior interpreted as indicating intent to pursue the job of superintendent. The predictor variables in the analysis included participant personal characteristics and the current and expected factors derived from the principal components analyses. The statistically significant standardized discriminant function coefficients derived from the discriminant analysis are in Table 5.

Table 5

Standardized Discriminant Function Coefficients (N = 587)

Predictor variable	Standardized discriminant coefficient
Likelihood of pursuing a job as superintendent	.76 *
Capability to become a superintendent	.41 *
Current satisfaction with time/family	.25 *

Note. Scoring for the superintendent certification grouping variable was as follows: 1 = yes, 2 = no. Likelihood of pursuing a job as superintendent and capability to become a superintendent were single rating item variables. Current Satisfaction with Time/Family was a composite scale derived from principal components analysis. The standardized discriminant coefficients report the relative contribution of a predictor variable to explaining variance in the grouping variable (superintendent certification).

Total Model: Wilk's λ (3, 583) = .80, $p \leq .0001$; $R_C = .44$, $R_C^2 = .19$.

* $p \leq .0001$.

As Table 5 indicates, two personal characteristics (i.e., likelihood of pursuing a superintendent position and capability to become a superintendent) and one current job facet factor (i.e., current satisfaction with

Time/Family) were highly significant ($p < .0001$) predictors of group membership. All coefficients were positive, indicating as the score for significant predictor increased, the participant scored as not having earned superintendent certification. As can be seen from the data at the bottom of Table 5, the canonical correlation between the linear combination of the significant predictor variables and the grouping variable ($R_c = .44$) was highly significant ($p < .0001$). The squared canonical correlation ($R_c^2 = .19$) indicated the significant predictor variables explained 19% of the variance in superintendent certification (1 = yes, 2 = no), a finding that exceeded the criterion ($R_c^2 = .13$) established by Cohen (1988, p. 478) for a “medium effect size” in canonical correlation analysis. This result indicated the effect size was of sufficient practical significance to warrant educational leaders considering use of this finding as a partial rationale for setting policies and procedures related to superintendent recruitment.

The final step in the discriminant analysis was to compute the classification results shown in Table 6.

Table 6

Discriminant Analysis Classification Results for Earning Superintendent Certification (N = 587)

		Predicted group classification		
		Yes	No	Total
Actual frequencies	Yes	57	15	72
	No	103	412	515
Correct classification? (%)	Yes	79.2	20.8	100.0
	No	20.0	80.0	100.0

Total actual grouped cases classified correctly = **79.9%**.

Note. Frequencies and percentages for correct classifications appear in bold.

These results also suggested the computed discriminant function had practical significance. As Table 6 indicates, applying the discriminant function to the data resulted in the following accurate predictions of whether or not someone had earned superintendent certification: (a) 79.2% accurate prediction someone had earned certification; (b) 80.0% accurate prediction someone had not earned certification; and (c) 79.9% overall prediction accuracy for the discriminant analysis model.

Multiple Regression Analysis

The regression results are in Table 7.

Table 7

Hierarchical Multiple Regression of Likelihood of Pursuing a Job as Superintendent on Control Variables and Predictor Variables (N = 587)

Variable	β	<i>t</i> -value	ΔR^2
Control variables			
Age	-.42	-12.7 ***	
Earned superintendent certificate	-.26	-7.8 ***	
Capability to become superintendent	.25	7.2 ***	
Step 1			.40 ***
Current satisfaction predictors			
Pay/Advancement	.12	2.8 **	
Step 2			.01 *
Expected satisfaction predictors			
Intrinsic	.13	3.0 **	
Time/Family	.09	2.0 *	
Step 3			.02 **

Note. The dummy coding for whether or not a participant had earned superintendent certification was: 1 = yes and 2 = no. The dependent variable in the above analysis was likelihood of pursuing a job as superintendent, measured by a single 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = not at all likely, 5 = very likely).

Full Model: $R^2 = .43$ ($F[14, 572] = 31.0, p < .0001$), Adjusted- $R^2 = .42$.

* $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$, *** $p \leq .0001$.

The personal characteristics assessed in this analysis included: age, gender, ethnicity, marital status, number of dependent children, whether or not the participant had earned superintendent certification, and self-reported capability to become a superintendent. We dummy coded the nominal scaled predictors. Table 7 reports only variables that were statistically significant. As Table 7 indicates, there were three highly significant personal characteristics: age ($\beta = -.42, p < .0001$), whether one had earned superintendent certification ($\beta = -.26, p < .0001$), and capability of becoming a superintendent ($\beta = .25, p < .0001$). The interpretation of these findings is as follows. Holding all other variables in the regression equation constant, as participant score for age increased, score for likelihood of pursuing a job as superintendent decreased. As participants scored “yes” for having earned superintendent certification (1 = yes, 2 = no), score for likelihood of pursuing a job as superintendent increased. And, as participant score for capability to become a superintendent increased, score for likelihood of pursuing a job as superintendent increased.

As indicated by change-in- R^2 ($\Delta R^2 = .40$), the above personal characteristics explained 40% of the variance in likelihood of pursuing a job as superintendent, an effect size that far exceeded the criterion ($R^2 = .26$) established by Cohen (1988, p. 414) for a “large effect size” in multiple regression analysis. Although Current Pay/Advancement ($\Delta R^2 = .01$), Expected Intrinsic Job Facets ($\Delta R^2 = .01$), and Expected Time/Family ($\Delta R^2 = .01$) were significant, the effect sizes associated with these vari-

ables were “small” (Cohen, 1988, p. 413) and lacked practical significance. The regression findings indicated researchers and practitioners should focus on age, earning superintendent certification, and self-reported capability of becoming a superintendent for the purposes of addressing superintendent recruitment policies and procedures.

Discussion

The study findings have implications relative to: (a) issues related to measuring principal reactions to the job of superintendent, (b) practical suggestions for addressing superintendent recruitment in the field, and (c) future directions for superintendent recruitment research.

Measurement Issues

The reliability of the scales derived from the principal components analysis was excellent according to standards described by Nunnally (1967), who established a coefficient alpha of .60 as the minimum coefficient alpha recommended for the use of composite scales in statistical analysis. The composite scales used in this study measured current and expected satisfaction with job facets, entered as predictor variables in the multiple regression equation. Coefficient alpha for these composite scales ranged from .74 to .90, with all but one reliability coefficient being at .84 or greater. A coefficient alpha of .80 or greater is considered to be an excellent result (Nunnally, 1967). This result suggests that the composite scales developed for this research are highly reliable and suitable for use in future research.

With respect to our use of a single 5-point Likert-type scale to measure the dependent variable (likelihood of pursuing a job as superintendent), we acknowledge our approach is limited when compared to the approach of using a multiple-item composite scale. However, we did adopt this item based on significant findings using this measure detected by leading recruitment researchers and reported in highly regarded referred journals (e.g., Young et al., 1993; Young et al., 1997). Also, we used a histogram and a normal data plot to assess the distribution of the scores on our dependent variable. This analysis confirmed that the ratings for likelihood of pursuing a job as superintendent closely conformed to a normal distribution, thus satisfying the normal distribution assumption of linear multiple regression analysis.

Practical Implications

With respect to the descriptive findings, there was virtual parity relative to the gender of the participants, suggesting recruitment officials at the research site may be heeding the call by Pounder and Merrill (2001) to make greater use of the human talent represented by women in addressing administrator recruitment. In contrast, the ethnicity frequencies reflect the need for substantial efforts to diversify the ethnic background of individuals holding principal positions and, as a such, being part of the pipeline of

qualified individuals to be applicants for superintendent vacancies. Various Kentucky school districts have, in fact, taken measures to address the ethnic issue by establishing administrative internship programs designed to identify educators of color with leadership potential early in their careers, and provide them with professional development experiences focused on greater leadership opportunities (W. B. Haselton, personal communication, June 15, 2006).

The descriptive statistics also indicate principals, as potential future candidates for superintendent vacancies, are individuals with definite limitations. Most principals (a) have not earned superintendent certification (87.7%); (b) do not intend to earn certification if they have not done so already (79.0%); (c) have not become a superintendent for 5 years or more after they earned certification, if they did; and (d) rate their capability to become a superintendent, and their likelihood of pursuing the job, as moderate and low respectively (e.g., means of 3.2 and 2.0 on 5-point scales). Such limited attraction to the superintendency among principals may result in inadequate applicant pools for superintendent vacancies in the future as the “baby boom” retirements escalate (U.S. Department of Labor, 2000). It may be necessary for education policymakers to establish incentives to stimulate more principals to earn superintendent certification and to reassess the degree to which existing superintendent certification curricula increase, rather than decrease, principal attraction to the job.

Relative to the results of the paired-samples *t*-tests, higher satisfaction ratings for facets in the current job may suggest job facets that impede principals from pursuing the job of superintendent. The most significant factor among these variables is job security. This finding may suggest the need for instructors in superintendent certification programs to discuss superintendent turnover in more depth, highlighting the fact that frequent turnover is largely a phenomenon within politically turbulent inner city school districts and small isolated districts, while the average tenure of superintendents nationally has remained constant in recent years at about six years (Kowalski, 2003).

The higher ratings for job facets relative to expected satisfaction in the job of superintendent provide information to be emphasized in superintendent recruitment generally, and in superintendent certification curricula in particular. For example, recruiters and certification program instructors desiring to increase job attraction should emphasize the more lucrative financial rewards and greater policy-setting latitude accorded to superintendents compared to principals.

The discriminant analysis findings suggest cause for concern relative to the effects of superintendent certification programs on job attraction. Individuals who earned certification had less likelihood of pursuing the superintendency and gave lower ratings for capability to do the job, possibly suggesting that the more individuals learn about the job through certification programs, the less attractive the job becomes. These data may suggest the need for changes in certification curricula to bolster student sense of job-related self-efficacy relative to the task of becoming a superintendent. Also, principals who rate Current Time/Family highest tend to

have not earned certification, suggesting another potential barrier to pursuing the job of superintendent. Some principals may view the necessary additional schooling and/or the job as too demanding in terms of time away from family.

There is a human resources device that could address some of the above factors in certification programs. An empirically tested method is to have inexperienced individuals who aspire to a new position preview the position using a realistic job preview (RJP), as developed and tested by Wanous (1973, 1974, 1980) and employed by numerous other recruitment researchers in the private sector (Barber, 1998; Rynes, 1991; Rynes & Barber, 1990). Defined operationally, an RJP is a representation of a job that depicts the position by presenting both positive and negative aspects of the job to potential job applicants (Wanous, 1973). In its most effective format, the RJP typically includes information demonstrating how job incumbents overcome and cope with the more challenging and negative aspects of a job. Empirical research has shown RJP's to have the following positive personnel recruitment and retention outcomes among job applicants and new employees: (a) more realistic expectations about the position and its job duties, (b) greater feelings of trust in the hiring organization, (c) greater awareness of coping mechanisms to address such negative job factors as stress, (d) increased job satisfaction, (e) fewer thoughts of leaving the position, and, ultimately, (f) lower employee turnover (Wanous, 1980).

There are a number of ways RJP's can be operationalized within superintendent certification programs. The methods include an in-person panel of superintendents describing the job, a video representation of the position and its duties, and written previews of the job and its positive and negative attributes. The in-person panel of superintendents, with special emphasis on coping mechanisms, would appear to be especially appropriate to the content of superintendent certification programs.

The multiple regression findings suggest various control variables (personal characteristics) such as gender, ethnicity, marital status, and number of dependent children do not explain significant variance in the dependent variable and should not be the focus of administrative action or policymaking. However, three personal characteristics of principals are the most practically significant predictors of likelihood of pursuing a job as superintendent. First, age is the single most important predictor. Older principals are less likely to pursue the job, suggesting recruiters and policymakers should focus on younger principals as the most likely individuals to groom for the superintendency. Second, the multiple regression results differ from the discriminant analysis results discussed earlier, in that having earned superintendent certification increased the likelihood of pursuing the job. Despite this finding there may still be a need to examine the content of superintendent certification programs which may be decreasing rather than increasing principal attraction to the job. The discriminant analysis result may be the more important result to guide administrative practice because the criterion variable in the discriminant analysis reflects the participants' actual behavior; that is, they either became superintendent certified or they did not. The regression analysis

criterion variable is a rating of the job, which is still a step removed from the actual behavior of pursuing the job by, for example, applying for a position vacancy. See the earlier discussion of RJPs as one possible strategy for increasing principal attraction to the superintendency. Third, as the score for self-reported capability to become a superintendent increases, so does likelihood of pursuing the job. The importance of this indicator suggests instructors in superintendent certification programs should monitor student scores on this variable at three points in time to assess program impact on student self-efficacy relative to the superintendency: program initiation, mid-point in the program, and program completion.

Implications for Research

The most promising avenues for future research relate to the geographical scope of superintendent recruitment and the positions held by the members of the broader pool of potential applicants for superintendent vacancies. This study addressed the pipeline of superintendent applicants in a single mid-western state. Future studies should involve similar assessments in other states, especially in areas undergoing systemic school reform. This research addressed the principal component of the applicant pool. Studies are needed about the other components of the applicant pool including practicing superintendents, deputy superintendents, and senior central office administrators who have experience as a principal and possess superintendent certification.

Conclusion

Despite the importance of recruiting qualified individuals to lead public school districts, virtually no empirical data exist relative to assessing the viability of members of the applicant pool for superintendent vacancies, an applicant pool that includes practicing principals. This study rectifies this gap in the administrative literature by providing both an instrument and a methodological approach for assessing the job pursuit intentions of principals as potential applicants. Educational leaders and policymakers need to know if those people who make up the pool of qualified applicants do, indeed, intend to pursue position vacancies. Without this information, educational recruiters cannot estimate the viability of components of the applicant pipeline and adjust recruitment strategies accordingly. It is hoped other researchers will continue the line of investigation initiated by this study and replicate this study in other regions of the country. It is only through successful recruitment that school districts can obtain the leadership needed to address the challenges faced by schools in this era of high-stakes-accountability school reform.

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Appendix

Survey Instrument

STATE ACTION FOR EDUCATION LEADERSHIP POLICY (SAELP)

PREAMBLE

The Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) recently received a Wallace-Readers Digest grant to study school and district leadership. An important part of this work is to conduct research on the nature of administrators' work, examine the administrator shortage, and to review state policies. These efforts are being directed towards enhancing the nature and quality of leadership through improving candidate pools, recruitment, training and retention of high quality principals and superintendents, including women and minorities. A state consortium comprised of the Kentucky Board of Education, the Education Professional Standards Board, the Governor's Office, the General Assembly, and a variety of state and local education, business, civic groups, and institutions of higher education advises the SAELP project.

You are being invited to participate in this study because you are a principal and your opinions and ideas about the principalship are valuable for improving school leadership. Your participation in completing this survey is voluntary; however, if you chose to not participate, you are not subject to any penalty. Further, there are no risks or benefits to you for participating.

The survey should take approximately 25 to 30 minutes to complete. Your completed survey will be stored at the (university name) and the data will be held in strictest confidence. Responses to the survey will be aggregated for reports or publications; thus, your identity will never be disclosed.

Directions:

1. Please provide a response to every question. If none of the alternatives provided for a question corresponds exactly to your position or opinion, select the alternative that comes closest to the answer you would like to give.
2. To complete the survey, follow the directions for each section. If you change a response, be sure that the change is legible and clear.
3. Place your completed questionnaire in the envelope provided and mail it by (date) to (investigator name). If you have any questions about this study, you may contact him (phone number and e-mail address).

Thank you for assisting the Kentucky State Department of Education with this survey!

(continued)

Appendix (continued)

PRINCIPAL SURVEY

Demographics

Age (years): _____ Gender (check one): ☐ Female ☐ Male

Ethnicity (check one): ☐ African American ☐ Asian American
☐ White American ☐ Native American
☐ Hispanic American
☐ Other (please specify _____)

Marital status (check one): ☐ Married ☐ Single
 Number of dependent children _____

Educational Level (please check all degrees that apply)

☐ Bachelor's ☐ Master's ☐ Specialist ☐ Doctorate

_____ In what year did you earn your highest degree?

Experience as an Educator

Since you have been an educator, what positions have you held and for how long? Please list chronologically beginning with your most recent position (i.e., teacher, counselor, resource teacher, assistant principal, principal, other?)

Position	Year Began	Year Ended
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

In what year did you become eligible to assume a position as an assistant principal/principal? (Year: _____)

Have you earned a superintendent's certificate? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If **YES**, in what year did you receive a superintendent's certificate? (Year: _____)

If **NO**, do you intend to earn a superintendent's certificate? ☐ Yes ☐ No

	Not at All Likely				Very Likely
How likely are you to pursue a job as a superintendent in the future?	1	2	3	4	5

At this point in your career, how capable do you feel you are to become a superintendent? Circle the **one** number on the scale below that applies best.

Not at All Capable				Extremely Capable
1	2	3	4	5

(continued)

Appendix (continued)

Current and Expected Job Satisfaction

There are two sets of rating scales for the job characteristics described below. The scales range from a low of 1 (Not at All Satisfied) to a high of 5 (Extremely Satisfied). The scales to the left relate to satisfaction with your current job. The scales to the right relate to job satisfaction if you were to assume a position as a superintendent. Please circle the one number for each scale that reflects your opinion best regarding current and expected job satisfaction.

Job characteristics	CURRENT JOB SATISFACTION					EXPECTED SUPERINTENDENT JOB SATISFACTION				
	In my current job, I rate my satisfaction with the below job characteristics as...					As a superintendent, I would expect to rate my satisfaction with the below job character- istics as...				
	Not at all satisfied		Extremely satisfied			Not at all satisfied		Extremely satisfied		
1. The opportunity to use my talents	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
2. My salary	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
3. The work climate	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
4. The freedom to make my own decisions	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
5. The sense of achieve- ment I experience on the job	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
6. The opportunity to try my own way of doing things	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
7. The vacation time I have	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
8. Income I receive from extra-service pay	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
9. The time I have to spend with my family	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
10. Extra income I can earn in the summers	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
11. My overall job security	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
12. The hours I work per week	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
13. The opportunity to advance my career	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

(continued)

Appendix (continued)

Job characteristics	CURRENT JOB SATISFACTION					EXPECTED SUPERINTENDENT JOB SATISFACTION				
	In my current job, I rate my satisfaction with the below job characteristics as...					As a superintendent, I would expect to rate my satisfaction with the below job characteristics as...				
	Not at all satisfied			Extremely satisfied		Not at all satisfied			Extremely satisfied	
14. The hours I work per year	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
15. The effect my job has on my spouse's career	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
16. The opportunity to experience varied activities on the job	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
17. The opportunity to serve others	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
18. The way district policies are implemented	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
19. The opportunity to give direction to others	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
20. The recognition I receive for doing a good job	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

- THANK YOU -